

March 13, 2012  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Testimony to support collective bargaining  
Senate Bill 352

My name is Nelly Ayala. I live at 142 Bissell Street, Manchester. I was a provider in New York for 9 years before I moved to Connecticut. I have been a licensed provider here in Manchester for 6 years. I currently have 5 full-time and 3 afterschool children in my care. The youngest is 1 years old and the oldest is 9.

As providers, we are writing because we would like to see improvements at Care4Kids. We need to be spending less time on the phone, where we rarely reach an actual person. Care4Kids generally needs to be more responsive, especially concerning the amount of time they spend reviewing applications. When I call, they always say that they are working on the parent's case. I often wait months for an answer on whether or not the parent was approved.

Care4Kids should also increase the amount we are paid for our work and redistribute how it is disbursed. Specifically, I think Care4Kids should reduce the parent co-pay because many parents cannot afford to pay it. If one changes the pay structure in this way, parents will be able to go to work knowing that childcare has been paid for. Many parents, both on and off the program, cannot work because they do not make enough to cover private pay providers or the Care4Kids co-pay. Many times, I do not charge parents the co-pay because I do not want parents to lose their work because they, for instance, cannot pay the \$50 co-pay for their child. My conscience won't let me do it.

I would like to form a contract with the state because, now that we are supporting each other through our providers union, we can resolve these issues and help improve Care4Kids. Please vote yes for SB352.

Nelly Ayala  
Manchester, CT